6th Grade Reading CHOICE List: You will be asked to read one of the following novels during the first weeks of school. You may also have a project and/or quiz over this book.

**The Girl Who Drank the Moon** by Kelly Barnhill (Level X/640L) Genre: Fantasy
Once a year in the Protectorate there is a Day of Sacrifice. The youngest baby is taken by the Elders and left in the forest to die, thus appeasing the witch who threatens to destroy the village if not obeyed. Unbeknownst to the people, Xan, the witch of the forest, is kind and compassionate. When she discovers the first baby left as a sacrifice, she has no idea why it has been abandoned. She rescues the infants, feeds each one starlight, and delivers the shining infants to parents in the Outside Cities who love and care for them. On one occasion, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight along with starlight, filling her with glowing magic. Xan is smitten with the beautiful baby girl, who has a crescent moon birthmark on her forehead, and chooses to raise her as her own child. Twists and turns emerge as the identity of the true evil witch becomes apparent.

**The Thing About Jellyfish** by Ali Benjamin (Level Y/740) Genre: Fiction
Everyone says that it was an accident...that sometimes things "just happen". But Suzy won't believe it. Ever. After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy was a rare jellyfish sting. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.

**Doll Bones** by Holly Black (Level Y/840L) Genre: Mystery, Fiction
At 12 years old, lifelong friends Zach, Poppy, and Alice are ferociously clinging to their childhoods. Using old Barbies, pirate action figures, dolls from Good Will, and their imaginations, they have created an exciting world of characters in an elaborate game. Figuring heavily in their plotline is the Queen, an antique doll of bone china that belongs to Poppy's mother and is strictly off-limits to the kids. She's also incredibly creepy. When Zach's dad throws away his action figures, the boy is so devastated that he ends the game abruptly, leaving the girls hurt and confused. Shortly thereafter, Poppy reveals that the Queen is made of the bones of a dead girl named Eleanor who has been communicating with her at night. The doll appears to be filled with Eleanor's ashes, and she has promised Poppy that she will make their lives miserable if they don't journey to Ohio, find her grave, and bury her properly. After much persuading, Zach and Alice agree to the journey. The Queen gets scarier and scarier as unexplained events begin to occur along the way. Black has created protagonists who readers will care about, and amusing secondary characters, like a pink-haired librarian and a crazy bus passenger who seems to be able to see Eleanor. This novel is a chilling ghost story, a gripping adventure, and a heartwarming look at the often-painful pull of adulthood.

**Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon** by Catherine Thimmesh (Level Y, 1060L) Genre: Non-Fiction
Here is a rare perspective on a story we only thought we knew. For Apollo 11, the first moon landing, is a story that belongs to many, not just the few and famous. It belongs to the seamstress who put together twenty-two layers of fabric for each space suit. To the engineers who created a special heat shield to protect the capsule during its fiery reentry. It belongs to the flight directors, camera designers, software experts, suit testers, telescope crew, aerospace technicians, photo developers, engineers, and navigators.

**Zombie Baseball Beatdown** by Paolo Bacigalupi (Level, 650L)
Milrow Meats, the meat-packing plant in Delbe, Iowa, is up to something. Pals Rabi, Miguel, and Joe can tell from the ungodly stink, and the anxious behavior of the people who work there. Further sleuthing reveals that SuperGrow nutritional supplement is being fed to the cows, creating undead bovines that, in turn, create "zombie burgers." And what happens when folks start snarfing those burgers? Though the plot synopsis recalls such gleeful splatter fests as John Kloepfer's Zombie Chasers series, in Bacigalupi's hands it feels closer to Walter Dean Myers' Cruisers series, with much of the story delving into issues often overlooked in youth fiction: the capricious treatment of immigrant workers, the absence of options for the disabled, and the questionable record of the USDA.

**Smile** by Raina Telgemeier (Level T, 410L) Genre: Graphic Fiction
Raina just wants to be a normal sixth grader. But one night after Girl Scouts she trips and falls, severely injuring her two front teeth. What follows is a long and frustrating journey with on-again, off-again braces, surgery, embarrassing headgear, and even a retainer with fake teeth attached. And on top of all that, there's still more to deal with: a major earthquake, boy confusion, and friends who turn out to be not so friendly.

**The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure** by Hans Enzenberger (Level S, 580L) Genre: Realistic Fiction.
In twelve dreams, Robert, a boy who hates math, meets a Number Devil, who leads him to discover the amazing world of numbers: infinite numbers, prime numbers, Fibonacci numbers, numbers that magically appear in triangles, and numbers that expand without end. As we dream with him, we are taken further and
further into mathematical theory, where ideas eventually take flight, until everyone — from those who fumble over fractions to those who solve complex equations in their heads — winds up marveling at what numbers can do.

**Pax** by Sara Pennypacker (Level T, 760L) Genre: Fiction
Pax and Peter have been inseparable ever since Peter rescued him as a kit. But one day, the unimaginable happens: Peter’s dad enlists in the military and makes him return the fox to the wild. At his grandfather’s house, three hundred miles away from home, Peter knows he isn’t where he should be—with Pax. He strikes out on his own despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty, and grief, to be reunited with his fox. Meanwhile Pax, steadfastly waiting for his boy, embarks on adventures and discoveries of his own.

**Last Shot: Mystery at the Final Four (The Sports Beat, #1)** by John Feinstein (Level X, 760L) Genre: Sports Mystery.
When Stevie wins a writing contest for aspiring sports journalists, his prize is a press pass to the Final Four in New Orleans. While exploring the Superdome, he overhears a plot to throw the championship game. With the help of fellow contest winner Susan Carol, Stevie has just 48 hours to figure out who is blackmailing one of the star players . . . and why.

**Fish in a Tree** by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (Lexile, 550) Genre: Fiction.
Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help, but her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there’s a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don’t always think alike.

On Choosing Day Will's heart was set on Battleschool, but he is small for his 15 years. Brave and skilled at moving and climbing silent as a shadow, his unwanted apprenticeship tests his talent and spirit in the battle against the Kingdom's ancient foes. Combining the intensity of a young King Arthur with the epic fantasy of The Lord of the Rings, Flanagan brings to America the adventure of the year.

**Unbroken (The Young Adult Adaptation): An Olympian’s Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive** by Laura Hillenbrand (Lexile: 850) Genre: Non-Fiction
In this captivating and lavishly illustrated young adult edition of her award-winning #1 New York Times bestseller, Laura Hillenbrand tells the story of a former Olympian’s courage, cunning, and fortitude following his plane crash in enemy territory. This adaptation of Unbroken introduces a new generation to one of history’s most thrilling survival epics.

**The Egypt Game** (Lexile: 1010) by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. Genre: Fiction
The first time Melanie Ross meets April Hall, she’s not sure they have anything in common. But she soon discovers that they both love anything to do with ancient Egypt. When they stumble upon a deserted storage yard, Melanie and April decide it’s the perfect spot for the Egypt Game. Before long there are six Egyptians, and they all meet to wear costumes, hold ceremonies, and work on their secret code. Everyone thinks it’s just a game until strange things start happening. Has the Egypt Game gone too far?

**Chasing Vermeer** (Lexile: 770) by Blue Balliett Genre: Mystery/Fiction
This bewitching first novel is a puzzle, wrapped in a mystery, disguised as an adventure, and delivered as a work of art. When a book of unexplainable occurrences brings Petra & Calder together, strange things start to happen: seemingly unrelated events connect, an eccentric old woman seeks their company, and an invaluable Vermeer painting disappears. The two find themselves at the center of an international art scandal. As Petra & Calder are drawn clue by clue into a mysterious labyrinth, they must draw on their powers of intuition, their skills at problem solving, and their knowledge of Vermeer. Can they decipher a crime that has left even the FBI baffled?

**Chains** (Lexile: 780) by Laurie Halse Anderson Genre: Historical Fiction
If an entire nation could seek its freedom, why not a girl? As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom. From acclaimed author Laurie Halse Anderson comes this compelling, impeccably researched novel that shows the lengths we can go to cast off our chains, both physical and spiritual.
The Sign of the Beaver (Lexile: 770) by Elizabeth George Speare Genre: Historical Fiction
Although he faces responsibility bravely, thirteen-year-old Matt is more than a little apprehensive when his father leaves him alone to guard their new cabin in the wilderness. When a renegade white stranger steals his gun, Matt realizes he has no way to shoot game or to protect himself. When Matt meets Attean, a boy in the Beaver clan, he begins to better understand their way of life and their growing problem in adapting to the white man and the changing frontier.

The Lost Colony of Roanoke (Lexile: 850) by Jean Fritz
The Lost Colony of Roanoke is one of the most puzzling mysteries in America's history. In 1587, 115 colonists sailed to the new world, eager to build the brand new Cittie of Raleigh, only to disappear practically without a trace. Where did they go? What could have possibly happened?

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart (Lexile: 983) by Candance Fleming
In alternating chapters, Fleming deftly moves readers back and forth between Amelia's life (from childhood up until her last flight) and the exhaustive search for her and her missing plane. With incredible photos, maps, and handwritten notes from Amelia herself—plus informative sidebars tackling everything from the history of flight to what Amelia liked to eat while flying (tomato soup)—this unique nonfiction title is tailor-made for middle graders.

The Emperor's Silent Army: Terracotta Warriors of Ancient China (Lexile: 1040) by Jane O'Connor
Three farmers are digging a well when suddenly their shovels hit something hard. It is a clay head of a mad who stares back at them, open-eyed and amazingly real looking. The farmers have never seen anything like it; neither have the archeologists who arrive and being to uncover more and more pottery men—first dozens, then hundreds and eventually thousands! Buried for more than 2,200 years, they are soldiers, life-size as well as life-like, and they stand at attention as if waiting for the command to charge into battle. The only thing missing is their weapons, and soon those are found too—thousands of real bronze swords, daggers, and arrowheads still so sharp they can split a hair. Now, after almost thirty years of ongoing excavation, a buried army of 7,500 terracotta soldiers and horses has emerged. And this site that three farmers accidentally stumbled upon ranks along with the Great Pyramids in Egypt as one of the true wonders of the ancient world.

The Storm Runner (Lexile: 600) By JC Cervantes
Zane has always enjoyed exploring the dormant volcano near his home in New Mexico, even though hiking it is challenging. He'd much rather hang out there with his dog, Rosie, than go to middle school, where kids call him Sir Limps a Lot, McGimpster, or Uno—for his one good leg. What Zane doesn't know is that the volcano is a gateway to another world and he is at the center of a powerful prophecy. A new girl at school, Brooks, informs him that he's destined to release an evil god from the ancient Maya relic he is imprisoned in—unless she can find and remove it first. Together they return to the volcano, where all kinds of crazy happens. Brooks turns into a hawk, a demon attacks them in a cave, and Rosie gives her all while trying to protect Zane. When Zane decides to save his dog no matter the cost, he is thrust into an adventure full of surprising discoveries, dangerous secrets, and an all-out war between the gods, one of whom happens to be his father. To survive, Zane will have to become the Storm Runner. But how can he run when he can't even walk well without a cane?

Dragon Pearl (Lexile: 780) by Yoon Ha Lee
Rick Riordan Presents Yoon Ha Lee's space opera about thirteen-year-old Min, who comes from a long line of fox spirits. But you'd never know it by looking at her. To keep the family safe, Min's mother insists that none of them use any fox-magic, such as Charm or shape-shifting. They must appear human at all times. Min feels hemmed in by the household rules and resents the endless chores, the cousins who crowd her, and the aunties who judge her. She would like nothing more than to escape Jinju, her neglected, dust-ridden, and impoverished planet. She's counting the days until she can follow her older brother, Jun, into the Space Forces and see more of the Thousand Worlds. When word arrives that Jun is suspected of leaving his post to go in search of the Dragon Pearl, Min knows that something is wrong. Jun would never desert his battle cruiser, even for a mystical object rumored to have tremendous power. She decides to run away to find him and clear his name. Min's quest will have her meeting gamblers, pirates, and vengeful ghosts. It will involve deception, lies, and sabotage. She will be forced to use more fox-magic than ever before, and to rely on all of her cleverness and bravery. The outcome may not be what she had hoped, but it has the potential to exceed her wildest dreams. This sci-fi adventure with the underpinnings of Korean mythology will transport you to a world far beyond your imagination.

The Lightning Thief (Lexile 700) by Rick Riordan
Percy Jackson is a good kid, but he can't seem to focus on his schoolwork or control his temper. And lately, being away at boarding school is only getting worse—Percy could have sworn his pre-algebra teacher turned into a monster and tried to kill him. When Percy's mom finds out, she knows it's time that he knew the truth about where he came from, and that he go to the one place he'll be safe. She sends Percy to Camp Half Blood, a summer camp for demigods (on Long Island), where he learns that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea. Soon a mystery unfolds and together with his friends -- one a satyr and the other the
demigod daughter of Athena -- Percy sets out on a quest across the United States to reach the gates of the Underworld (located in a recording studio in Hollywood) and prevent a catastrophic war between the gods.

**Life of Pi** (Lexile 830) by Yann Martel
The son of a zookeeper, Pi Patel has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrated from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea. When they finally reach the coast of Mexico, Richard Parker flees to the jungle, never to be seen again. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional—but is it more true?

**Black Ships Before Troy** (Lexile: 1240) by Rosemary Sutcliff
As the gods and goddesses of Olympus scheme, the ancient world is thrown into turmoil when Helen, the most beautiful woman in all of Greece, is stolen away by her Trojan love. Inflamed by jealousy, the Greek king seeks lethal vengeance and sends his black war ships to descend on the city of Troy. In the siege that follows, history's greatest heroes, from Ajax to Achilles to Odysseus, are forged in combat, and the brutal costs of passion, pride, and revenge must be paid. In the end, the whims of the gods, the cunning of the warriors, and a great wooden horse will decide who emerges victorious. Homer's epic poem, *The Iliad*, is one of the greatest adventure stories of all time and Rosemary Sutcliff's retelling of the classic saga embodies all of the astonishing drama, romance, and intrigue of ancient Greece.

**The Hero Schliemann: The Dreamer Who Dug for Troy** (Lexile: 910) by Laura Amy Schlitz and Robert Byrd
From the time Heinrich Schliemann was a boy — or so he said — he knew he was destined to dig for lost cities and find buried treasure. And if Schliemann had his way, history books would honor him to this day as one of the greatest archaeologists who ever lived. But a little digging into the life of Schliemann himself reveals that this nineteenth-century self-made man had a funny habit of taking liberties with the truth. Like the famous character of his hero, the poet Homer, Schliemann was a crafty fellow and an inventor of stories, a traveler who had been shipwrecked and stranded and somehow survived. And Heinrich Schliemann was determined to become a legend like Homer — but in his own time. Following this larger-than-life character from his poor childhood in Germany to his achievement of wealth as a merchant in Russia, from his first haphazard dig for the city of Ilium to his final years living in a pseudo "Palace of Troy," this engaging tale paints a portrait of contradictions — a man at once stingy and lavishly generous, a scholar both shrewd and reckless, a speaker of twenty-two languages and a health fanatic addicted to cold sea baths. Laura Amy Schlitz weaves historical facts among Schliemann's fanciful recollections, while Robert Byrd's illustrations evoke his life and times in wonderful detail. Along the way, THE HERO SCHLIEMANN gives young readers food for discussion about how history sometimes comes to be written — and how it sometimes needs to be changed.

**Every Bone Tells a Story: Hominin Discoveries, Deductions and Debates** (Lexile: 1010) by Jill Rubalcaba and Peter Robertshaw
Jill Rubalcaba and Peter Robertshaw recount the unearthing of four hominins--Turkana Boy, Lapedo Child, Kennewick Man, and Iceman. Each discovery leads not only to deductions that scientists made in laboratories, but also to controversial debates over the scientists' differences of opinion over how, or even if, the pieces fit together. Learn how specialized the field of archaeology has become and how new technology can change both scientists' theories and the way we view the past.